declaration as National Highways, they suffered from inherent deficiencies such as inadequate number of lanes, weak pavement and bridge structure and absence of safety features.

During the last three years, Rs. 156.12 crores have been allocated and Rs. 139.88 crores have been sanctioned for improvement and maintenance works respectively on National Highways in Jharkhand. Besides, 191 kms. length of National Highways are being upgraded to four-lane facility under National Highway Development Project (NHDP) and another 265 kms. of National Highways is proposed for improvement to four-lane facility under Pradhan Mantri Bharat Jodo Pariyojana (PMBJP).

(c) The improvement of National Highways including those in Jharkhand, is a continuous process and is carried out in a phased manner depending upon the availability of funds and *inter se* priority.

Scheme for agricultural workers

*250. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI:

Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are implementing any scheme or considering to pass a comprehensive law for the welfare of the agricultural workers who are particularly in the unorganised sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, whether any scheme is proposed for them; and

(d) at what stage this scheme is pending for implementation at present?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) The Government are implementing 'the Unorganised Sector Workers' Social Security Scheme, 2004 in 50 districts of the country on pilot basis for the workers in the unorganised sector which, *inter-alia*, include agricultural workers.

A proposal regarding enactment of comprehensive law for the welfare of agricultural workers has been under consideration of the Government since 1975. Due to divergent views of the State Governments the matter could not be processed further.

(b) The benefits available under the scheme are old-age pension, personal accident and health insurance cover.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Child labourers in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

† *251. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH : Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of child labourers estimated in the country, particularly in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh as on January, 2004;

(b) the action taken by the Central as well as the State Governments upto the year 2003-04 to check child labour alongwith the details of success achieved in this regard; and

(c) the action contemplated in this behalf for the next two years?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) As per 2001 Census figures (provisional), the number of working children in the country is 1.259 crore. In Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the number of working children as per 2001 Census figures (provisional) are 10,65,259; 3,64,572 and 12,62,570 respectively.

(b) Government of India is implementing National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) all over the country including the States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan for rehabilitation of children withdrawn from work. The project is implemented through the NCLP Societies. The District Collector/District Magistrate is the Chairperson of the NCLP Society. He is in-charge of the project implementation and for the overall monitoring of the project components. The number of children covered through special schools under National Child Labour Projects Scheme so far are 6400 in Madhya Pradesh, 13,400 in Chhattisgarh and 20,550 in Rajasthan.

(c) The Tenth Plan strategy proposes to eliminate child labour in hazardous sector through the National Child Labour Projects Scheme. Children between the ages of 5-8 would be put into primary schools under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and children between the ages of 9-14 would be put into primary schools after attending the special schools run under the NCLPs.

Abolition of contract labour

*252. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.